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HUSBAND *vs.* WIFE;

OR

NOBODY TO BLAME.



HUSBAND ^{vs.} WIFE.

Clifford

WITH DESIGNS BY A. H. OPPIN
(Illustrator of "Nothing to Wear.")



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P ROLOGUE.

—:0:—



BEL McADAM—may his
tribe increase!—

Awoke one night from a
deep dream of peace,

And saw, within the gas-
light of his room,

A female spirit (dressed up à la Bloom-

Er), writing something in a book of gold.

Exceeding drink had made McAdam bold,

And to the presence in the room he said,

“What writest, dear?” The spirit raised its head.

Prologue.

And with a voice like that of cooing dove,
Murmured: “ *The names of men whom women
love.*”

“ And is mine one ?” asked Abel. “ No, fir-ee,”
Replied the spirit. Abel roared with glee,
Then coolly said: “ Sweet sprite, write me as one
Who ne’er finds fault with what a woman’s done.”
The Bloomer wrote and vanished; but the next
night

It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names by love of woman blessed.
When, lo! *McAdam’s name led all the rest!*

CANTO FIRST.



HUSBAND *vs.* WIFE.

*Apropos of the salt Mr.
Doolittle Dolt with his wife
findeth fault*



RAY whose is the fault," inquired Doo-

little Dolt,

Of Ma'am Dorothy Ditto, as she passed

him the salt,

"Pray whose is the fault,

That nothing whatever comes on to this cloth,

From a canvass-back duck to a basin of broth,

But it's spoiled in the cooking? To scold I am loth,

And in fact, as you know, ma'am, I never get wroth,

(Oh, confound that salt,

I've taken too much,)

Husband *vs.* Wife.

But you'll find, Mrs. Dolt,

You reckon too much

On my patience, if these things are long to continue,

For it's hard, after straining each nerve and each sinew

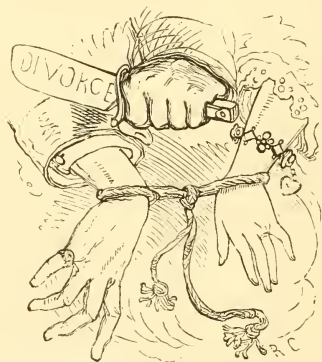
To raise money enough to make both the ends meet,

To find one end is bone, and the other not sweet,

While, though lack, dear, of spice is by no means your fault,

I'm e'en put on allowance of pepper and salt."

Madam Dolt to slack up bids
her husband whose back up
she says he's e'er getting and
forever fretting about nothing
whatever and threatening to
sever the tie that forever
should bind them together in
all sorts of weather



Husband *vs.* Wife.

“Now, Doolittle, pray do shut up :

We never to dine or to sup,

Or to have a good chat in the evening sit down.

But your face, once so handsome, is spoiled by a frown,

While your back it goes up, and your foot it goes down,

And at once you proceed to get up a great row, Sir,

(Don't say that you don't, for you're doing it now, sir,)

And to scold till you're hoarse,

And e'en threaten divorce,

When you know that you took me for better or worse,”

(Yes, and got much the worst of it, but that is of course)

“And unless, Mr. Dolt,

You stop finding fault,

I'll——but no matter, please hand back the salt.”

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Mr. Dolt asks permission to speak but derision alone he encounters so he falters and flounders and instead of a blessing receives a good dressing.



“With pleasure, Ma’am Dolt,

And now pray permit me—”

“Not a word, sir, unless

Of blame you acquit me,

And give up, (why, bless me, you’ve used all the salt,)

This ridiculous business of e’er finding fault.”

“But allow me, good madam,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Ever since those two fussy French servants we've had 'em,
Everything in this house has—"

"Dear sir, you are a mad man,
And I pray you at once just to bridle your tongue,
Or at least to stop singing that dolorous song,
Which grates worse on my ear than a sonorous gong,
That whatever goes on in this house is all wrong.
Why, whene'er you discover a fault or a flaw,
According to your notions of order and law,

You hem and haw,

And croak and caw,"

(Why not say jaw?)

"When you know that to please you I do, sir, my best,
And from morning to night have no leisure nor rest.

Husband *vs.* Wife.

And in fact hardly ever have time to get dressed,"

(Od's death,

When a woman gets going she never takes breath)

"Before home you come

All sober and glum,

To grumble and scold at whate'er you can name,

And keep on exclaiming, 'for shame, dear! for shame!'

When you ought to relinquish this silly old game

Of finding fault,

Since things all go on, sir, exactly the same,"

(By jingo, that's true,)

"For the very good reason, so well known to you,

That there's no one to blame,

Mr. Dolt,

No one to blame."

Husband *vs.* Wife.



Mr. Dolt in a windy speech
his vindi-cation sets forth for
what it is worth excusing his
wife (whos the pride of his
life) but laying stress all the
same on the fact that to blame
some one surely must be for
weak coffee and tea etc. and
he grown mad and moody
has a fling at nobody.

Now, with all the virtuous indignation

Of a guilty man, his vindication

Poor Dolt he began,

And knowing, as who does not? that flattery

Is the very best weapon with which the battery

Of a woman to an-

Swear, proceeded thus; "My dearest Dorothy,

(You see I'm not wrothy),

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Though I've travelled the world o'er from Dan to Beersheba,

Not a woman I know, dear, no matter how fair she be,"

(Here a fib, of course,

But the truth would embarrass one,)

"Whose goodness with yours

Will at all bear comparison,

While your sex, (and, my love, I admit that your sex it is,

That soothes and sustains us in all our perplexities,)

Would crown you at once, dear, at any fair tournament,

Its proud queen of beauty, its pride and its ornament.

Thus, you see, Madam Dolt,"

(Though twas plain that she didn't, for a certain sly toss of her

Head, showed that she saw he was playing philosopher,)

"That in you not a fault,

Nor a flaw do I find,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Though you call me a monster and say I'm unkind ;

For since you're a woman,

Though e'en women are human,

(Zounds ! as I am a true man,

I've drunk too much wine.)

Of course you're a seraph, an angel, in fine,

Of course you're divine ;



After this bit of flattery he opens his battery or tit-for-tattery and sets forth in detail with a dolorous wail a list of his grievances which he vows by heaven it is nonsense to claim should meet with no blame.

So on that point I pray you to be at your ease.

Husband *vs.* Wife.

(That is, if you please,)

While I go on to say,

In my own quiet way,

That when half the time, love, our meals are all spoiled,

When the lamb is half roasted, the mutton half boiled,

When the coffee is weak,

And the butter is strong,

And the silver is short,

And the service is long ;

When the milk is all sour,

And the vinegar sweet,

And nought in the cup-

Board is fit to eat.

When the door-plate is dirty, the entry unswept,

And it's plain that the dogs in the parlor have slept,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

When the buttons like acorns drop off from my——shirt,

(An indelicate word,

But when a man's hurt,

The first one that comes,

Right out he will blurt,)

When there are holes in my stocking as big as my heel,

(‘The old stockings be darn’d, sir!’ say you : Gad, I feel—

Though I hardly dare utter the same,)

When these things are so, love, no others to name,

It’s as certain as salt is salt,

That to say that there’s no one at all, dear, to blame,

Is all nonsense or, which just amounts to the same,

All gammon, Dorothy Dolt.”

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Madam Dolt gets verbose
and at Doolittle goes at least
all she knows until not to
ape her scolding the capers
he orders and the papers
(which the poet describes in
vile diatribes) when at once
Mrs. Dolt calls again for the
salt and resolved to be heard
has her woman's last word.



It was now Dorothy's turn,

And she poured out such volleys

Of satire and wit

Against husbands' follies,

And against men in general, who are all just the same,

(So, at least, she thinks,)

And find fault when they know that there's no one to blame :

(O, the terrible minx !)

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Their wives least of all,
That Doolittle's gall
Was a-rising fast,
But reflecting at last,
That one might just as well

Hope, by striking, the ding to get out of a bell,

As a woman, by answering, to silence or quell,

He resolved then and there

The disputation

To end; so with air

Of desperation,

He requested the servant to hand him the capers,

(They had mutton for dinner,) and the evening papers,

Which just then had come in overrunning with news,

As usual, of murders, and outbreaks, and stews,

Husband *vs.* Wife

Of shipwrecks and failures,

(Great fun for the Jews)

Of riotous women

And mutinous crews,

Of elopements, seductions,

Or whatever you choose,

Ail dressed up our dear children and wives to amuse,

As he told Madam Dolt,

Who again passed the salt,

Just to turn his attention once more to the dinner,

And have her last word: "or as I am a sinner,"

Said he, "in our quarrels my wife's e'er the winner,

And whene'er I find fault

With no matter what (I confess it with shame),

Makes me own in the end that there's nobody to blame,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Nobody to blame."



Mr. Dolt a pathetic and highly esthetic address makes to Nobody assuring that slow body he has much to answer for etc. and so forth.

"O Nobody! Nobody! how much you've to answer for,"

Said Dolt, as his darling just then took her fan, sir, for

The purpose of cooling her wrath,

Which required, at the least, a cold bath

To dispel and

Subdue,

"If my children went ragged as some children do,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

(Hear them yell and

Boohoo!)

While their mothers are working for Timbuctoo,

Or the babes in New Zealand,

Or Kalamazoo ;

Or if ne'er a whole shirt I could boast for my back, or

There wasn't so much in the house as a cracker

To eat,

'Twould be just the same,

(Don't you see 't?)

And no matter whatever the fault I might name,

The answer'd be ready of "Nobody to blame."

If the china is broken,

Nobody broke it,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

If the silver is taken,

Nobody took it,

If the claret is muddy,

Nobody shook it,

If the gas burns till day-light,

Nobody lit it,

If the dog's ear is cloven,

Nobody slit it,

And whatever the mischief,

Nobody did it;

Thus it's nobody, nobody, all the day long,

For, whatever is done, there is nobody wrong;

And when 'neath the sod, I

Am laid, my poor body,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

I fear me, will hear

The same old melody,

(Though that's not the name)

Year after year,

Of nobody to blame,

Nobody to blame.

CANTO SECOND.



Mr. Dolt's lingo schedule
which it's pretty sure you'll
find miscellaneous and a state-
ment extraneous of awful dis-
asters to ships and shipmas-
ters to railroads and sich
for any of which he Dolt
thinks it shame the owners to
blame



OW by fate or good fortune,

Our Dolt was an owner

In one or two steamships,

Besides a fine schooner,

Two flat-boats, a church,

A new magazine,

(For making gunpowder)

A sewing machine,

A steam-reaping ditto,

(They two went together)

And a bran new mosquito-

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Net made for cold weather,
Not to mention here several neuralgiac potions,
And some twenty or thirty new Yankeeified notions,
From a fine-toothed saw-mill to a three-leg-ged bedstead,
In which his earthly all was invested.

Well, it now and then happened,

And sometimes oftener,

That before one had time

To order his coffin, or

Make his last will,

On one of his steamers,

Which (see large bill)

Are all of them screamers,

Some unlucky flue or unluckier boiler

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Would explode, and at once the man's mortal old coil, or
Whatever you call it, right off him was shaken,
With no ghost of a chance, sir, to save his dear bacon :
Or perhaps another on some ship went to wreck, or
Was killed on a road in which Dolt was director,
Or lost his dear life in some patent machine,
Owned by Dolt, and in which, just because he was green,
He got tangled, and never thereafter was seen.



An improper sneer that ought not to be here at the meddling journals for their stories diurnal of awful catastrophes (see the last strophes) that happen each day and which he ventures to say they print 'cause 'twill pay.

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Now in all such cases the impertinent papers,

(Called the lights of the age, though they're nothing but tapers)

Come right out the next day,

Just because it will pay,

And publish at length all the frightful details,

With most piteous comments,

Setting forth all the torments

The editor feels in recording such tales,

(Though when there's a lack of 'em,

He prints a whole pack of 'em

Of his own invention)

And praying the mayor, without any detention,

An inquest to order, in humanity's name,

To find out, if it may be, who the deuce is to blame.

Husband *vs.* Wife.



The author states with great innocence a curious coincidence and proceeds to show that if winds will blow and destroy good ships and their fame eclipse it's by no means the fault of Doolittle Dolt.

Now—only to think of it!—the very same day

Mr. Dolt and his wife had the little affray

Above recorded, news came of the wreck

Of one of his ships

(That splendid three deck-

Er, the “Apocalypse”)

On the banks of Newfoundland—how came she there?

On her way,—I've forgotten this moment from where—

Husband *vs.* Wife.

In a furious gale,

Which caused her to leak (although five years since caulked

As tight as a whale),

While all efforts to free her were constantly baulked,

—So, at least, went the tale—

Because (although how should the owners e'er know it,

Or in case that they did know, how foolish to blow it),

Not a pump on her deck could the captain make go,

And so

The ship she went down, as the best ships will do,

With two thirds of her passengers and most of her crew.

Husband *vs.* Wife.



How Mrs. Dolt differs wide
and the other side proceeds to
state as against her mate and
insists that it's plain that if
she's to blame for each house-
hold fault that he Dolt must
be blamed and his name de-
famed when his ships go to
wreck with no pumps on deck
which she thinks is a shame
though Dolt is her name.

Now, Ma'am Dolt, when this story her husband he read it her

With the comments of the very belligerent editor,

Made an awful ado,

Just because he insisted (and you'd do it, too),

That a certain wise person, and he could tell who,

Could and would certify in the owner's own name,

That say what the world might, there was no one to blame.

"No one to blame," cried she, "that's of course,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Because you are the owner ; but whether is worse,

Mr. Doolittle Dolt,

For me, sir, to say

On some unlucky day,

When there's not enough salt

In the soup,

Or the stoop

Is not clean, or your shirt has a button off,

Or the dog has just carried a nice shoulder of mutton off,

That there's no one to blame,

Or for you to say the same,

Now a ship with her crew to the bottom has sunk,

Because furnished much worse than a Chinese junk,

(Which at least has pumps,

Though her masts are stumps.)

Husband *vs.* Wife.

When, to say it, I'm bold, sir,
If fitted and rigged as she ought to have been,
It's as certain as life, that no water had been
Very long in her hold, sir,
While the furious tempest she then might have weathered,
Easy and free,
And round their dear homesteads that crew had been gathered
Now drowned in the sea."



She apostrophizes the men at this crisis and growing quite humdrum propounds a conundrum or riddle or what not and asks if we ought not to solve it before complaints any more we lay at her door.

Husband *vs.* Wife.

"O you men! you men! who are always so cruel.

To us women to whom you preach up what a jewel

Consistency is,

Pray unriddle me this,

How is it you still declaim

'Gainst your wives and your daughters the weary day long

And our sex defame,

As if woman were guilty for all that goes wrong

(E'en your own eccentricities ;

For vexed men's bliss it is

To lay upon us, just as though we were Atlases,

The fault of their blunders, their sins, and rascalities.)

How is it our shame

You still will proclaim

While the dreary old strain you forever prolong,

Husband *vs.* Wife.

That with you naught is wrong,
But that for all the disasters and follies and crimes
That dishonor your sex in these much boasted times
Of Reform and what not,
There's no one to blame,
One tittle or jot,
No one to blame."



Mr. Dolt here admits (for he has candid filis) that his wife has the best of it and says many a test of it he might give but he don't or else won't and insists that when men fight their wives, it is plain they always pay dear and get a flea in their ear.

"Didn't I tell you," said Dolt, "that my wife had the best of it

Husband *vs.* Wife.

In every quarrel?

I might furnish you many another good test of it,

Nay, what's more I'll

Engage (for it's clear that the women all fool ye),

That my case is in no way whatever peculiar,

But that in all this metropolis,

Among gentry or populace,

There's never a man with his wife tries his wits,

But he's ever the first in the end to cry quits."

True, men rarely give up,

Yet that night when at sup,

(They had their evening confection late)

Says Dolt, in a tone affectionate :

"My dear angel, I think it most clear that to-night

Husband *vs.* Wife.

We both have been wrong, yes, and both have been right,
And if you who good sense have so often exhibited,
Will admit—”

But she kissed him right there and admitted it,
And the subject at once they both cheerfully quitted it,
They hoped once for all,
And then wound up a quarrel by good manners prohibited,

With the following Moral :

That as nearly all men, not to stretch it, are mortal,
And nearly all women, beg pardon, the same,
And we are more or less likely, it seems, to be caught all,
In doing things justly entitled to blame,
It follows that each, at his matins and vespers, is

Husband *vs.* Wife.

Bound to acknowledge not your but his trespasses,

And that e'en in the matter of Dolt *vs.* Dolt,

It's their own private business, sir,

Whose is the fault.

EPILOGUE.

—:0:—



F the wed reader thinks I'm
wed,

Or if the pecked think I
am pecked,

They know not well the
subtle head

That shuns the rock where they are wrecked.

Single or not to me is near,

Hymen and low men are the same,

The vanished loves to me appear,

And one to me are maid and dame.

Epilogue.

They reckon ill who seek me out ;

When me they court, I take my wings,
I am the flirter and the flirt,

And I the song that Cœlebs sings.

The old maids pine for my abode,

And pine in vain the sacred Three ;
But thou, meek lover of the good,

Read this, and give thy heart to me.

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